

POEM ANALYSIS QUESTIONS UNIT 3:

IT'S A HEAD THANG

Suggested questions for reflection - small group discussion - class discussion

1. In poetry, line breaks are strategic and may be used to heighten rhythm, indicate a place where the readers should pause to reflect and and/or visualize, or line breaks may be used to adhere to a predetermined poetic format. Carefully read the poem and discuss the strategy of the line breaks. Give examples from the poem to support your analysis.
2. **Syntax:** Read the poem again and focus on syntax. Compare the function of line breaks to sentence structure. How do line breaks and syntax impact the poem?
3. The poem begins and ends with the same statement. Read the poem omitting the first and last sentence. What impact does the repeated line have on the content? Why is the first line repeated at the end?
4. What words or phrases indicate art work?
5. **Diction:** Discuss the connotation and allusion of the following words: (aura, gris-gris, leopard skin, crown), (uncover, black cotton ball tears).

Myth and Mask

Suggested questions for reflection - small group discussion - class discussion

1. **Allusion:** In the first stanza there is a mythological allusion. Why is it used and what does it indicate?
2. **Diction:** What words or phrases in the first three hairstyles allude to royalty or African ancestry? Explain.
3. **Conflict:** What is the conflict the poet presents with each hairstyle? Explain and give examples from the poem.
4. What opinion does the poem relay regarding dyeing hair?
5. What is the final opinion of hair and hairstyles in the poem? Explain.
6. **Refrain:** There is a phrase repeated throughout the poem. What does this phrase mean? Analyze.

Nine Billion Dollar 'Do

Suggested questions for reflection - small group discussion - class discussion

1. This poem is an oral presentation or spoken word poem. When cued, the audience poses the refrain question, "What does nine billion dollars look like"? Why is this phrase repeated?
2. What does each stanza indicate about the writer's attitude?
3. **Tone:** What is the tone of the poem? Explain.
4. In the final stanza what point is being made about nine billion dollars? Do you agree or disagree with the poem? Explain your position.

A NAPPY SHAME

Suggested questions for reflection - small group discussion - class discussion

1. Why does the speaker want her hair to be straight? Discuss and provide examples from the poem.
2. What are some of the comments the narrator has heard regarding her hair?
3. **Diction:** What does the speaker think about the word "kinky"?
4. By the end of the poem the speaker reveals her true desire. What is it? Provide evidence for your response.
5. **Stanzas:** As a strategy, there are no stanza breaks in this poem. Explain why. What impact does it have visually?